



DECISION MEMO

Foster Creek Footbridge

**USDA Forest Service
Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
Pintler Ranger District
Granite County, Montana
Township 5N., Range 12W., Section 4**

Background

The Foster Creek Trail #8045 is a non-motorized Forest Service system trail located in the Flint Creek Range, north of the Anaconda Job Corps Center. The trail currently utilizes a stream ford of Foster Creek that is coincident with National Forest System Road #195. The existing stream crossing is an unimproved ford which has negatively impacted the stream by widening the channel and increasing sedimentation. Many members of the public access Tr. # 8045 by parking before the crossing and fording the stream on foot, which can be hazardous during high flows.

Decision

I have decided to build a footbridge immediately upstream of the existing ford on Foster Creek. No part of the bridge will be located within the highwater mark of Foster Creek. Small sections of trail will be constructed in order to connect the new foot bridge into the existing trail template. This footbridge will make access to the Foster Cr. Trail #8045 safer and more enjoyable for the public while reducing resource damage to the banks of Foster Creek.

Design Features Required by this Decision

The following design features are hereby made part of my decision and are described by resource area below:

Wildlife: Implementation may start after July 1. Food and attractant storage, possession and handling as detailed in Food Storage Order 2014-BD/BITT-009 will be followed for all activities.

Archaeology: If cultural resource sites or artifacts are discovered during project implementation the Forest Archeologist will be notified immediately.

Vegetation: Noxious weeds will be controlled following procedures in the Noxious Weed Control Program ROD (2002) for the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.



Aquatics: No fuel storage within 300 feet of stream. Construction will occur between July 15th and September 1st in accordance with programmatic consultation. If western toads are encountered they will be removed from the construction site.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable CE category for this project is **36 CFR 220.6 (e)(1) Construction and reconstruction of trails.**

Based on my review of the project record, I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I considered resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- ♦ **Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.** Potential effects of this decision on proposed, threatened, and endangered species as well as sensitive species determined “not likely to adversely affect” for grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*) and lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) and “no impact” for all wildlife sensitive species. There will be “no effect” to bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) or their critical habitat and “no impact” to westslope cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi*). Western toad (*Bufo boreas boreas*) “may impact individuals or habitat but will not likely contribute to a trend towards federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species”. “No effect” to sensitive plants.
- ♦ **Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds.** The project does not fall within a municipal watershed and will have no negative effect to floodplains or wetlands.
- ♦ **Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas.** This project is not within a Congressionally designated Wilderness area, Wilderness study area, or national recreation area.
- ♦ **Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas.** This project is not within an inventoried roadless area.
- ♦ **Research natural areas.** This project is not within a research natural area.
- ♦ **American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites.** Based on surveys, there is low probability of American Indian and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites in the project area.
- ♦ **Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas.** Based on surveys, there is low probability of American Indian and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites in the project area.

Public Involvement

This action was listed as a proposal on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) on August 10, 2021. Preliminary scoping was initiated in December 2018 and further outreach was conducted with the Anaconda Trails



Society and the Flint Creek Trails Association in the spring of 2021. Comments received supported the project.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision is consistent with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Land Management Plan (2009). The project was designed in conformance with Forest Plan direction including all applicable standards, objectives, and guidelines. The proposed action is consistent with all other Federal, State, and local laws and requirements.

Administrative Review Opportunities

Decisions made under Categorical Exclusions are not subject to objection pursuant to 36 CFR 218. The special use permit holder, however, may appeal this decision pursuant to Department of Agriculture regulations found at 36 CFR 214.

Implementation Date

This decision is not subject to objection pursuant to 36 CFR 218 and may begin immediately. Work is expected to commence August 2021.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Josh Lattin, Recreation Specialist, Pintler Ranger District, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, 88 Business Loop Philipsburg, MT 59858, (406) 859-3211.

8/16/2021

CAMERON L. RASOR
District Ranger

Date

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